



www.SanPedroWaterfrontArtsDistrict.com

CALIFORNIA CULTURAL DISTRICT LETTER OF INTEREST

Dear California Arts Council,

San Pedro Waterfront Arts District is grateful for this opportunity to request the support of the California Arts Council, in order to enhance a long-standing cultural district in the harbor region of Los Angeles.

The mission of the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District is to promote San Pedro's authentic arts, culture and entertainment character through Advocacy, Marketing and Education activities. We are nestled between a gritty industrial port complex and the stunning natural beauty of the Pacific Ocean. The peninsula geography creates an end-of-the-world feeling and our very close-knit community is comprised of a variety of ethnic influences. We are proud of our small town atmosphere, while belonging to the nation's second largest city.

San Pedro is about to experience an energized wave of development, due to the rise of the San Pedro Public Market; a development-friendly Councilman; the planned construction of over 492 rental housing units in the downtown core and 676 homes under construction on the site of a former Navy housing site, along Western Avenue. This seems to be a sustainable surge that will carry this community into the future. Becoming a California Cultural District reflects the intentions outlined by the former CRA to evolve into a lasting organization.

We are heavily invested in not allowing gentrification to roll over our unique, essential character or wipe out our rich cultural history. Instead, we want the many cultural assets of this community to thrive and be enjoyed by tourists, visitors and the surrounding greater South Bay/Harbor communities.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

The San Pedro Waterfront Arts District is a nonprofit organization created from the ashes of the state Supreme Court's decision in 2009 to strike down Community Redevelopment Agencies. It is a volunteer organization made up of artists and arts organizations who embrace growth, while remaining vigilant against gentrification efforts that could obliterate the community's unique character. San Pedro has been left at the altar of redevelopment many times; becoming a California Cultural District is a natural progression of the intentions of the former CRA to protect and grow the area's burgeoning art scene. What a wonderful way to showcase this quirky community, where the stunning natural coastline meets the nation's busiest port; where immigrants from all over the world come together but maintain their rich customs; where poet Charles Bukowski penned his last words and prima ballerina Misty Copeland danced her first steps.

As the Los Angeles CRA prepared for closure, we worked with arts organizations, local business owners, restaurateurs and the Chamber of Commerce on a sustainable transition plan. The Arts, Culture and Entertainment District, formerly known as ACE, implemented a five-year strategic plan, which developed more than 50 projects/collaborations and provided over \$321,000 in grant funding to assist San Pedro artists, galleries and arts organizations. During this time, infrastructure was developed to outreach to arts organizations, qualify grant seekers and evaluate project proposals.

In the fall of 2013, while anticipating the final year of the CRA-funded plan, the ACE Advisory Committee committed itself to lead a transition from the CRA grant-dependent model to a new organization – the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District (Arts District). We are now focused on building a sustainable non-profit organization, capable of raising additional funds via grants, sponsorships of public art projects, arts advocacy and public education programs.

Since becoming a non-profit in December of 2014, the Arts District has organized a nine member volunteer Board, an Advisory Council, as well as a 12-member Design Advisory Panel to assist with public art-related projects. The goals of the new Arts District are to:

- Cultivate new sustaining partnerships;
- Build upon past accomplishments and use the infrastructure created under the CRA to advance future projects;
- Generate new opportunities to support local arts, culture and entertainment;
- Fulfill our mission to nurture the cultural roots of San Pedro through arts advocacy, education and promotion.

Arts District Accomplishments to date:

In December 2014, we formed a 501c3, nonprofit organization with new bylaws, a revitalized board and a mission focused on leaving a lasting legacy via public art projects.

- Worked with Los Angeles City Council District 15 Office and Clean San Pedro to paint 17 DOT utility boxes on Pacific Avenue and Harbor Boulevard.
- Developed a new web site (SanPedroWaterfrontArtsDistrict.com) and social media platform on Instagram and Facebook.
- Publish monthly email newsletters touting First Thursday Art Walk happenings, gallery info and local events, sent to over 1200 list members.
- Organized a 12-member Design Advisory Panel, comprised of visual artists, gallerists and arts professionals, who assist with public art choices.
- Completed three large mural projects; a \$42,000 contract from the LA Department of Cultural Affairs and two privately-funded murals on a new restaurant in San Pedro.
- Implemented various Arts Education efforts to engage the community – our first event was to screen the film “*Exit Through the Gift Shop*” and the second film event was “*Iron Giant*,” along with a panel discussion about the arts. We also sponsored two films during the October 2016 San Pedro International Film Festival – “*Playing Lecuona*” and “*Dark Progressivism*.”
- Currently working with a coalition of property owners, the Neighborhood Councils and the CD15 Office to raise funds to paint four murals on our Gaffey Great Street, thus creating a painted Town Center around our public library.

PARTNERS

We chose the following partners because they have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness of implementing their individual missions, while advancing the role of culture in our community. They represent a unique variety of approaches to maintaining not only our shared history, but the cultural integrity of San Pedro.

Angels Gate Cultural Center (<http://angelsgateart.org/>) provides space for artists to work and to engage community through arts education, exhibitions of contemporary art, and cultural events. Housed in WWI Army barracks, perched on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, AGCC was converted to an arts center in the 1970's and provides studio space to over 30 artists, including world famous bassist

Mike Watt. Angels Gate is a place that unites art, community and culture through creative discovery, exploration, and enlightenment. For the past couple of years, AGCC has maintained a pop-up gallery in the heart of the downtown arts district.

Grand Vision Foundation (<http://www.grandvision.org/>) originally formed to save the Warner Grand Theatre, a 1,500-seat movie palace, from becoming a swap meet, the Grand Vision Foundation organization has since contributed over \$4 million to support the Theatre including a capital campaign in 2004. Owned by the City of Los Angeles, the Warner Grand hosts numerous cultural events annually promoted by GVF through their website and marketing. These efforts serve Grand Vision's mission of providing an arts anchor in downtown San Pedro, revitalizing our historic downtown and contributing to the cultural life of the larger community. As the Friends, Grand Vision also provides ongoing advocacy, technical assistance, repairs/restoration and a corps of volunteers for events. Grand Vision has a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Los Angeles to act as its official Friends' Group. GVF also operates the Grand Annex and a very successful Meet the Music Program.

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (<http://www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org/>) the historic Frank Gehry-designed aquarium displays the largest collection of Southern California marine life in the world. With its spectacular natural setting adjacent to Cabrillo Beach Coastal Park and the Port of Los Angeles, CMA is uniquely suited to its leadership role in marine science education, aquaculture research and community recreation. Since 1935, CMA has provided visitors with both a natural and interactive approach to learning about the marine environment of Southern California. CMA is committed to inventive placemaking activities, such as the reinvention of their gift shop, an upcoming free dance event with the Heidi Duckler Dance Company and the pursuit of a John Van Hammersveld mural.

Office of Councilman Joe Buscaino (<http://www.la15th.com/>) an elected official with a deep appreciation for the arts and its role in revitalizing our community, Councilman Buscaino began his leadership training in middle school, via his involvement in the Henry Dana Middle School performing arts program, playing Nicely Johnson in *Guys and Dolls*. He has instilled this love of the arts in his children, appearing with them onstage and is a consistent advocate for the arts in this community, as well as the cultural attractions throughout the CD 15 District. He was re-elected to his first full four-year term on March 5, 2013 and recently elected to a second, five and half year term. The 17 painted DOT boxes and new murals are a direct result of Councilman Buscaino's involvement with the Arts District.

San Pedro Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.sanpedrochamber.com/>) - The mission of the San Pedro Peninsula Chamber of Commerce is to promote, support, and advocate the interests of the business community. Its vision is to make San Pedro a better place to live, work, and visit. The chamber is a non-profit 501 (c)(6) mutual benefit corporation chartered under the State of California on March 15, 1957 and originally chartered as the Chamber of Commerce of San Pedro on February 21, 1906. The San Pedro Chamber is a partner organization to the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District and was one of the founders of the ACE Committee under the CRA. Daily they demonstrate that the arts mean business by dedicating the walls of their Boardroom Gallery Conference Room to revolving art shows, curated by the surrounding galleries and artists. For the past six years, the Chamber Boardroom gallery is the gathering point for free guided tours of the FirstThursday ArtWalk.

DISTRICT TYPOLOGY AND LOCATION

We are an urban district focused on cultural production at the mid-point of our life cycle. Based on the last census, the median age in the district is 34 and the median household income is \$57,000. Our demographics, along with the fact that over 75% of the population has graduated high school, are key indicators of art participants. We know these art patrons will be more involved in their community as volunteers, as shown in the 2009 NEA Report, *Art Goes in Their Communities*. The socio-economic

factors along with the new wave of development, poises this area at a key juncture to keep culture alive in our community.

The former core boundaries of the Special District are mentioned in the LA Department of City Planning San Pedro Community Plan text, V3, page 58 of the December 2012 draft plan and recognizes what the community thought was important:

Special Districts

Arts Culture and Entertainment District

In San Pedro, the arts and the waterfront are key contributors to the ongoing revitalization of the area and provide physical, social, cultural, and economic benefits that strengthen and enliven the community. Many artists, and arts/cultural organizations have found a home in San Pedro, becoming integral to the community with their events offering significant economic benefits to local businesses such as restaurants, cafes, and shops.

The Downtown Arts Culture and Entertainment (ACE) District Plan was created by the Chamber of Commerce to halt the loss of artists and art galleries brought about by rising rents in Downtown San Pedro, refer to Figure 2-1 for boundaries. The ACE District Plan and the non-profit born out of the ACE Plan – the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District is a marketing strategy administered by the Chamber of Commerce and was formed to help make the area more business and permit-friendly to working artists, performing arts venues, art galleries, restaurants and merchants thereby preserving Downtown’s historic and pedestrian- friendly environment.

Goal LUI2:

A downtown district that sustains and promotes cultural and economic vitality through activities, access and infrastructure designed to stimulate commerce and sustainability in all sectors of the arts, culture and entertainment.

LUI2.1

Cultural facilities. *Actively support the development of arts, cultural and entertainment facilities and events in Downtown San Pedro to attract visitors and establish a unique identity for this district.*

LUI2.2

Celebrate artists. *Encourage the development of individual offices, studios, galleries and live/work units for artists, architects, landscape architects, interior designers, craftsmen, and other design-oriented professionals in Downtown San Pedro.*

LUI2.3

Public art display. *Develop accessible locations and public spaces for display of public art, featuring both permanent and temporary installations.*

LUI2.4

Historic resource preservation. *Support the preservation of culturally and historically significant sites and structures in Downtown.*

Please see the attached Cultural District Map for the district’s topology and asset listings.

CULTURAL DISTRICT PROSPECTS

The historic core of downtown San Pedro has been renting to artists since 1944, with studios in storefronts and warehouses, as seen on the cultural district map. There are also many commercial buildings housing many studios, organizations and work/live options in the district.

Our partner, Angels Gate Cultural Center offers studios in former army barracks for more than over 50 artists of all disciplines. CRAFTED at the Port of Los Angeles, a permanent weekend market with handmade apparel, home decor & food goods, houses a plethora of artists with space and marketing to sell their artwork. Each of these non-traditional spaces offers regular arts events, with monthly art openings and classes in settings all over the district. There are still many vacant spaces in the district open to new artists and organizations, providing more opportunities to grow our arts culture. Recently

Meta Housing built the 49 unit Pac Arts loft apartments as low-income artist residences, replete with studio spaces and meeting rooms.

Many new opportunities are on the horizon. The shuttered Los Angeles County Courthouse, occupying a key corner in downtown San Pedro, is being considered for a satellite gallery for Los Angeles County Museum of Art. These changes to the district along with the economic development plans for the harbor region will continue to grow our creative and artistic presence. All of the organizations and artists involved in the cultural district are informed by the harbor community's history and proud traditions. The local art scene draws together and shares the existing authentic character and heritage of the San Pedro Waterfront, one of the largest, busiest working ports in the nation.

For 20 years, the community has participated in a First Thursday ArtWalk, one of the first in our region. Thousands of local residents show up every First Thursday to celebrate visual art, socialize and patronize participating restaurants. The Arts District supports this effort through ongoing promotion in its monthly newsletter, web site and social media postings. Since the First Thursday ArtWalk has become so successful, it has spawned a Third Thursday Music Walk. We are working in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Improvement District to urge the studios, galleries and artists to launch a Saturday ArtWalk, in order to attract more art tourists beyond the local community.

Since our inception in 2009, we have built significant infrastructure for Artist Calls and Proposal Evaluations, in order to make recommendations for sub-recipient grants and public art. We maintain a roster of qualified artists for future projects and instituted a Design Advisory Panel, comprised of artists, gallerists and art professionals, who help advance imagery reflecting the essential character of our area.

We have worked closely with the San Pedro Business Improvement District to create a mural program for its Property Owners and have painted two murals on a new restaurant called Pappy's. The BID also sponsors a trolley through the streets of the Downtown area. With the formation of the Cultural District and new designation, the hope is that the trolley will take visitors through the entire district and connect all of the cultural assets.

For the past five years, the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce (another partner) has hosted revolving art shows in its conference room and has renamed it the Boardroom Gallery. The Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is actively welcoming performing arts activities, including a dance performance and an opera on the beach. Its Friends group is working on a large-scale mural with renowned artist John Van Hamersveld. And each fall, the Aquarium hosts a Sustainable Seafood Festival, recognizing food as one of our cultural assets.

Since Mayor Garcetti instituted his Great Streets Program, we have been working with Central San Pedro, Northwest and Coastal Neighborhood Councils on Neighborhood Purpose Grants to financially bolster our efforts to paint four murals on our Gaffey Great Street.

In recent years, there has been an increased connection between the arts and economic development in urban centers resulting in the establishment of over 90 arts districts (otherwise known as cultural districts). We live this connection everyday – highlighting our communities' dedication to the creation and presentation of the arts.

San Pedro's arts district developed organically, by artists who moved here seeking cheaper rent and amiable studio space. As we are in the throes of development, we have begun to witness new condos and repurposing of vacant spaces that can support residential and commercial spaces. A cultural designation would not only be the natural progression of the CRA-funded ACE Committee, but give us an imprimatur to achieve sustainably and continue our work to advocate for the arts.

Our arts and culture community serves this area in many beneficial ways – we contribute to urban

revitalization, economic development and artist centers. We think the arts provide cities with a better quality of life and allow them to brand themselves as creative and cultured in order to promote tourism, attract new residents and encourage new businesses.

DISTRICT STAKEHOLDERS AND PERSONNEL

The strength of this cultural district lies in the breadth of cultural offerings in the district and in the surrounding area. Each of the stakeholders listed currently collaborate on events in the district and with the core partners. We have matured in our individual silos and now are in a position of knowledgeable strength to reach out beyond our traditional roles. Our cross-promotional marketing efforts will enhance the regional profile of the district, while moving us towards new growth and connections in a longstanding operational district. Through collaborative marketing and branding, each organization will gain a larger audience. Banding together to promote our many assets will attract more funding opportunities.

Cultural Stakeholders:

- AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles
- Battleship USS Iowa
- Croatian Cultural Center
- National Watercolor Society
- Owner Run Restaurants
- Cabrillo Marine Aquarium
- Los Angeles Maritime Institute
- Los Angeles Maritime Museum
- Mueller House
- Pt. Fermin Lighthouse
- Lane Victory
- San Pedro Chamber Boardroom Gallery
- Fort MacArthur Museum
- Korean Bell of Friendship

Arts Stakeholders:

- Cornelius Projects, Laurie Steelnik
- Michael Stearns Studio
- Crafted at the Port of Los Angeles
- Pac Arts Building - Helene Weinberg
- Angels Gate Cultural Center
- Grand Annex
- Warner Grand Theatre
- Grand Vision Foundation
- Little Fish Theatre
- TE San Pedro Rep
- Golden State Pops Orchestra
- San Pedro Art Association
- 4th Street Lofts
- Peoples Place

Along with countless artists, galleries and other organizations, as listed on the attached Cultural District Map, the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District already enhances the current offering of First Thursday and Third Thursday events. We are working with the San Pedro Business Improvement District and the galleries to instigate a Saturday ArtWalk.

By bringing art to non-traditional arts locales, such as the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce Boardroom Gallery, arts and cultural experiences become everyday encounters. One of our goals is to permeate the entire area with public art to draw cultural tourists from the entire region. Arts education events happen throughout the district and bring a more non-traditional audience; building new arts devotees out of visitors to the Battleship USS Iowa, AltaSea supporters of blue technologies and Cabrillo Marine Aquarium foodies who believe in sustainable seafood.

In June 2016, AltaSea and Gensler unveiled renderings for a new 35-acre net-positive energy use “campus for innovation” on the historic City Dock No. 1 at the Port of Los Angeles. Gensler designed the AltaSea project, which is intended to bring people together under the common goal of understanding the ocean. The plan will call for new research buildings, public plazas, and restored

structures, creating spaces where visitors, scientists, and educators can develop new ocean-related technologies and learning programs.

Each of the core partner organizations will be involved with district operations and planning. Most of the partners already belong to the board of the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District and are founding members. The personnel of these core organizations work well together and have a long-standing history of collaboration and growth. Each of the organizations will dedicate employee hours to the sustainability and progress of the San Pedro Cultural District.

San Pedro Waterfront Arts District will continue to serve as the lead organizer of the district with the largest personnel outlay. Grand Vision Foundation, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and Angels Gate Cultural Center will help to coordinate events and participate in activities in the district. The Chamber and Councilman's office will support the district as resources to market activities and as audience builders.

LINDA GRIMES SAN PEDRO WATERFRONT ARTS DISTRICT MANAGING DIRECTOR

Since moving here in 1996, Linda has been actively engaged in the arts in San Pedro and has served as the Executive Director of the Golden State Pops Orchestra, a contractor and volunteer with the Grand Vision Foundation and as a Board member of the Angels Gate Cultural Center. Throughout her six-year term as a San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, she has passionately advocated for the arts. She is a Founding Member of the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District.

LIZ JOHNSON GRAND VISION FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Liz is a Founding Member of the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District and serves on its Board. Due to her tireless efforts to support and promote the arts in San Pedro, we now have four active theatres who present plays, musicals, orchestra concerts and many other varieties of performance art. The Grand Vision Foundation is the Friends Organization of the Warner Grand Theatre and is a stellar non-profit organization, as well as the cornerstone of our cultural life.

AMY ERIKSEN ANGELS GATE CULTURAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After serving as the AGCC Education Director, Amy was promoted to be the Executive Director in 2014. Since then, AGCC has become financially stable, added significant arts events, a presence in downtown San Pedro and energized the Board into a cohesive working body. Amy has been recently elected to serve on the Board of the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District.

CAROLINE BRADY FRIENDS OF CABRILLO MARINE AQUARIUM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Before taking the helm of the Aquarium, Caroline had a rich history of service to this community. She was a journalist for the San Pedro News-Pilot and the Daily Breeze newspapers and in addition was a Field Deputy for former Councilwoman Janice Hahn, as well the Development Director of Harbor Interfaith Services. Caroline is committed to reinventing the Aquarium as a destination, using creative placemaking techniques and cultural attraction promotions, such as the upcoming Heidi Duckler *Fish Eyes* performance on the front lawn.

ELISE SWANSON SAN PEDRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CEO AND PRESIDENT

The San Pedro Chamber has been in a partnership with the Arts District since its formation in 2009 and Elise embodies the idea the arts mean business. She has continued to open the doors of the Chamber for art shows in the Boardroom Gallery Conference room and hosts the free guided ArtWalk tours every FirstThursday.

OFFICE OF COUNCILMAN BUSCAINO JACOB HAIK AND RYAN FERGUSON, STAFF DEPUTIES

Since our inception, the Council Office has been a willing collaborator with the Arts District and also promotes the arts on a daily basis. The Artist Painted DOT box project, aided by CD15, was a perfect way to begin the journey of public art and creative placemaking in this community. We are grateful for the opportunity, afforded us by the Councilman to paint large scale murals in the Arts District, as a

project with the LA Department of Cultural Affairs.

As we stated in this LOI, the San Pedro Waterfront Arts District has been preparing to become a Cultural District for the past nine years. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to submitting a full proposal at your invitation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 310 732 0010 and via email: llgrimes@ix.netcom.com.

Sincerely;

Linda Grimes

Linda Grimes
San Pedro Waterfront Arts District